

U.S.: SALT II OPPOSITION

The Coalition for Peace through Strength, a pro-defense group of former military officials and current members of Congress, has charged that the SALT II treaty currently under negotiation between the US and the USSR is "exceedingly dangerous and foolish".

The Coalition believes that the treaty would "lock the US into strategic inferiority with the Soviet Union", with the US at a two-to-one disadvantage in strategic offensive weapons; a 47-to-one disadvantage in strategic defense weapons; a six-to-one disadvantage in missile megatonnage; and roughly equal missile accuracy.

The opposition group has, in many instances, used different formulas for computing US and Soviet strength from those used by US negotiators. The 47-to-one strategic defense weapon figure, for example, results from the Coalition's inclusion into Soviet strength of 12,000 SAM's, which the Carter Administration has not considered as part of Soviet defensive strength. The Coalition has also included the 5,000 Soviet missiles they claim are equipped for re-fire capability as augmenting total Soviet military strength.

Failure to include the Soviet Backfire bomber in the SALT II talks also draws strong opposition criticism. In a Washington forum sponsored by the Coalition, former Air Force Secretary Thomas Reed charged that while the US unilaterally halted work on the B-1 bomber, the Soviet Backfire is now a reality, with inter-continental capability. Reed added that in 1982 the USSR will surpass the US in total number of manned bombers.

General Richard Stilwell, former UN Commander in Korea, warned that SALT II will not be verifiable. He based his conclusion on the fact that CIA employee Herbert Kampiles sold information on a new satellite surveillance system to the USSR and that the US has lost its electronic eavesdropping posts in Iran. He claimed that the US presently cannot even verify compliance with SALT I.

The lack of an adequate civil defense system by the US was attacked by Coalition spokesmen, who warned that such a gap will encourage the Soviets to believe they could emerge from a nuclear war comparatively unscathed. Coalition studies assert that 160-million Americans would die in a nuclear war, while only 5-million Soviet citizens would be killed.

The discouraging opposition claims come at a time of increasing uncertainty about the outcome of the SALT process. Observers generally agree that SALT critics

U.S.-USSR: ANTI-SATELLITE

State Department spokesmen indicated in mid-April that talks between the US and the USSR on limiting the testing of anti-satellite weapons may be resumed within the month.

The talks between the two nations have yet to produce agreement. Inside sources say that the US is seeking a one-year ban on the testing of the anti-satellite devices. Analysts concede that the USSR has taken the lead in this area, having been at work for at least five years. The US, on the other hand, only began its program two years ago.

The anti-satellite talks are not part of the much-broader SALT II talks, now reportedly near conclusion. Yet because both nations depend on satellite systems both for surveillance and strategic targeting of nuclear weapons, destruction of satellites would mean a critical blow to either nation's defense systems.

The Carter Administration now believes that the only way to effectively limit the development of anti-satellite capabilities is at the testing stage. The US is reportedly a year away from testing its own devices, which have included designs for high-energy lasers and non-nuclear missiles.

Verification of such an agreement would be difficult beyond the testing stage. Once the weapons were developed and tested, there would be little means to determine whether they had been deployed.

The Carter Administration also reportedly considers the one-year limit on testing of anti-satellite weapons as only a first step toward a broader, comprehensive agreement in this critical area. The ideas will probably be discussed by President Brezhnev and President Carter at their proposed summit. •

have dominated the debate thus far, with such key senators as John Glenn and Howard Baker, and former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, now openly voicing reservations.

Insiders also say that even if the US and the USSR come to immediate agreement and hold a signing summit at the earliest possible date, the Senate would not be ready for a vote until the fall of 1979 — well into the start-up of the 1980 electoral season. The approach of the next elections, those observers feel, would greatly handicap serious debate. •